

**ARRA/Title II, Part D:
Enhancing Education Through Technology**

COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM – 2009-10 SCHOOL YEAR

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
FOR A
STATEWIDE EVALUATION OF ARRA/TITLE II, PART D
GRANT PROGRAMS**

GENERAL INFORMATION

The purpose of the NCLB Title II-D (Enhancing Education through Technology) competitive grant program is to provide financial assistance to schools with high poverty and the greatest need for technology support and/or schools identified for improvement. The American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) signed by President Obama in February of 2009 provides supplemental assistance to schools this year under the Title II-D program.

Federal guidelines for the program require that districts have a means of evaluating the extent to which Title II-D activities are effective in (1) integrating technology into curricula and instruction; (2) increasing the ability of teachers to teach; and (3) enabling students to meet challenging state standards. Since Title II-D is a state-administered program, VTDOE is responsible for ensuring that districts comply with statutory requirements. Therefore, districts are required to submit updated budgets, data for performance reports, and other reasonable data to the VTDOE before being awarded funds in subsequent years.

The focus of this RFI is to identify evaluation services that can be provided for the grants funded by both ARRA and regular NCLB Title II-D monies in the fall of 2009. The Vermont Department of Education is issuing this RFI on behalf of awardees. The purpose of this RFI process is to identify entities ahead of time that are well-versed and experienced in evaluating education technology programs. A limited number of evaluation information packages will be selected and ultimately, one entity will be chosen to lead and manage the overall evaluation program for the Title II-D program.

TIMELINE FOR THIS STATEWIDE EVALUATION FOR TITLE II-D/ARRA RFI	
Request For Information Released	September 22, 2009
Submission Deadline (Received at VTDOE)	November 12, 2009 4:00PM
Evaluator Award Notification	Anticipated Late November 2009
Project Implementation	Anticipated December 2009 – June 2011

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS RFI PLEASE CONTACT:

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Vermont Department of Education
120 State St. Montpelier, VT 05620-2501
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CHOOSING AN EVALUATOR FOR ARRA/TITLE II-D GRANTS

The entity will be chosen in a collaborative effort with the Vermont Department of Education and district grantees, with one interested grantee serving as fiscal agent for the evaluation process. Entities interested in being considered for the role of evaluator should develop a package of information that highlights past successful evaluation programs and illustrates their capacity to develop a comprehensive evaluation program that meets the need for ARRA reporting and the need for strong reliable data in terms of illustrating the impact of education technology programs. There are no funds currently associated with this RFI. Evaluation services will be funded with monies that are set aside by grantees for evaluation purposes. Respondents are asked to include a preliminary proposed budget, not to exceed \$100,000. Once grant awards are finalized in late November, grantees will assist in the final selection process, during which time one or more entities may be asked to submit formal proposals with definitive budgets. The figure of \$100,000 is used here as a beginning estimate.

All Title II-D grantees will be required to participate in a statewide evaluation of their grant activities, with ARRA grantees setting aside 10% of the grant budget for this purpose and regular grantees contributing smaller amounts toward statewide evaluation efforts. District proposals will specify a general evaluation plan, plus any data and benchmarks that would be meaningful to their particular projects as part of the evaluation process. The exact evaluation plan will be developed collaboratively with grantees, VTDOE, and an external evaluator, with one lead district establishing a contract with an external evaluator on behalf of all grantees. Grantees will be asked to participate in decisions about the evaluation process and product, as well as in any local evaluation activities necessary to understand the impact at each grant site. This configuration is desired in order to maximize the potential for a larger and more meaningful evaluation across all projects and because one coordinated evaluation plan will be less taxing on each individual grantee. In an effort to expedite the process of finalizing external evaluator services, districts are encouraged to share this information with potential evaluators.

ANTICIPATED SCOPE OF WORK

Evaluation encompasses many aspects in the education technology realm, the most desired aspect being the realization of evaluative components that signify the positive impact that technology can have on teaching and learning. In our work at the Vermont Department of Education and the increased emphasis nationally on 21st Century skills and the acquisition of those skills for students to become successful in the working world, there is some urgency for developing tools and resources for measuring the impact of technology tools in the classroom.

It is anticipated that an entity engaged in this work would, at the least, be required to:

1. Develop survey tools and instruments for regular dissemination to Administrators, Teachers, and Students. This may also involve some survey tools for Parents. These survey tools will need to address pre- and post- program aspects. The following data collections are anticipated for all grantees receiving Title II-D ARRA funds:
 - a) VT School Technology Survey – This will be an annual survey submitted for each building in the district as well as the district as a whole. This has been done in some form in the past, but effort is being made to formalize an annual process.
 - b) Administrator, Teacher, and Student Surveys – Grantees will work with evaluator to come to consensus to finalize these instruments for use as pre and post surveys.
 - c) Some form of automated quarterly reporting system on grant programs. This will help grants to focus on funding deadlines and keep the VTDOE informed of continuing progress. This could include a monthly budget report process.

2. Work with the Vermont Department of Education and their ongoing partnership with the SETDA Collaborative, a national evaluation tool being constructed across states to measure successes of the national Title II-D program. (SETDA = State Education Technology Directors Association, <http://www.setda.org>). This work would include regular phone call conferences with the SETDA Collaborative.
3. Work with the Vermont Department of Education to develop measurements and reports that fulfill the obligation of the increased reporting required by the USDOE around ARRA funds.
4. Develop a schedule of visitations to gather information via focus groups, interviews, student observations, etc. with the grant programs running in Vermont schools.
5. Develop a long-term process for regularly scheduled (and brief) reporting on those participants who have left programs and are using the skills acquired in their classrooms.
6. Formalize reporting needs that are required by VTDOE.
7. Formalize the sharing of results of programs with program participants.
8. Become familiar and adept at navigating funding planning around deadlines that are inherent in Title II-D federal funds.
9. There is a possibility that the evaluation entity will be asked to accompany the Vermont Department of Education to Washington, DC for meetings with USDOE staff. Cost for evaluation entity travel will be responsibility of said entity.

While it is expected that the entity will work closely with the Vermont Department of Education, as well as with grantees, it is hoped that the entity can operate in a fairly independent manner to oversee the evaluation process. The Vermont Department of Education will assist in developing a schedule for regular reporting on each of the grant programs.

AMERICAN REINVESTMENT AND RECOVERY ACT ASSURANCES

One of the guiding principles behind the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is, “improve student achievement through school improvement and reform” and addresses the four specific assurances included in ARRA requiring states to certify progress in these areas as a condition for receiving ARRA funding. These assurances were authorized under bipartisan education legislation – the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the America Competes Act of 2007:

1. Making progress toward rigorous college and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments that are valid and reliable for all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities;
2. Establishing pre-K to college and career data systems that track progress and foster continuous improvement;
3. Making improvements in teacher effectiveness and in the equitable distribution of qualified teachers for all students, particularly students who are most in need;
4. Providing intensive support and effective interventions for the lowest-performing schools.

An additional expectation for use of ARRA funds is full transparency in reporting on use of funds. All sub-recipients will be required to report to the Vermont Department of Education for federal reporting purposes on a quarterly basis at minimum, the amount of funds expended, how they were expended, and the number of jobs created or retained with use of these funds. Be aware also, that additional reporting requirements may be forthcoming.

PROCESS FOR CONSIDERING EVALUATION SERVICES

To be considered for the role of the evaluation entity, please **submit an information package by no later than 4:00 PM on November 12, 2009** to the address listed in the Submission section. The packet must include the contents indicated in “Information Package Format and Content” section of this document.

A review of the materials will take place during November with a panel of individuals from districts that have been selected for funding through Title II-D grants. This panel will rate the quality of the submissions and the capacity of the applicant to successfully implement what has been requested. Submissions will be scored according to the rubric criteria within this document.

The **anticipated** announcement date for the evaluation entity chosen is Late November, 2009, with work commencing in December 2009 and continuing through June 30, 2011.

This process is open to any entity that can provide the required materials and has a desire to serve in the role. This is not limited to Vermont-based entities. Selection will be based on the review panel’s perception of the ability of the entity to provide a comprehensive evaluation that meets the rubric criteria listed at the end of this document. In brief, these include:

1. Ability of the entity to provide a comprehensive evaluation that will be assistive to the Vermont Department of Education in their reporting and evaluation requirements for the US Department of Education.
2. Ability of the entity to provide a comprehensive evaluation that will be informative to the field at large about the successes and areas for improvement in each of the grants evaluated.

FORMAT & CONTENT OF EVALUATOR INFORMATION PACKAGE

All of the following elements are requested:

1. Cover Page – Complete contact information including your web page URL.
2. Background - A complete resume, company documentation, website, and other relevant materials that can convey the work experience of the entity and its ability to begin implementing an evaluation plan quickly after being selected as Vermont's Title II-D Program Evaluator.
3. Letters of Support - Up to four letters from entities or organizations familiar with the work and capability of your entity.
4. Example - At least one example of a completed evaluation from another education related project. This example should show both short-term and long-term aspects of evaluation. (ex.: How a program was evaluated as it was delivered, and how the participants used this expertise in 6 months, 9 months, 12 months out.)
5. Title II-D Reporting - Conveyance of a thorough understanding of ARRA expectations for reporting on Title II-D and some indication of understanding on reporting requirements through EDFacts within the US Department of Education.
6. Research - A brief document that describes your knowledge of education technology and its relation to research around positive outcomes for students and learning in K-12 classrooms.
7. Data Collection - Examples of how the entity will provide both qualitative data and quantitative data for a comprehensive view of the programs (see scope of work).
8. Dissemination - Description of how entity will publicize and exhibit the evaluation results and analysis for the field. This must include making results publicly available in a user-friendly interface online.
9. Statement of Projected Budget – Respondents should indicate a general budget associated with their submission. The following areas can be supported in the contract for evaluation services:
 - a. Mileage, lodging, travel expenses, coordination expenses for individuals or entities involved in the work;
 - b. Any fees or costs associated with dissemination of information (i.e., web page development, print materials for grantees, final reporting packets, etc.)
 - c. A **limited** amount of hardware to complete the evaluation work.
 - d. Books, materials, supplies, and refreshments for meetings or activities.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

Submit two (2), (1 original and 1 copy) complete packets as described above (no faxes please) and include the following:

- Cover Page with entity URL clearly noted.
- Business card for main contact

Submission Deadline: Submissions must be received by the Vermont Department of Education no later than **4:00 p.m. on November 12, 2009**. Mail to:

Title IID, Overall Evaluation Submission - c/o Peter Drescher
Vermont State Department of Education
120 State Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05620-2501

Selection Process: All submissions will be reviewed by a small panel. This panel will rate the quality of the submissions (See Scoring Guide below) and the capacity of the applicant to successfully implement what has been requested. Submissions will be scored in each of the four areas described above.

SCORING RUBRIC: STATEWIDE EVALUATION FOR TITLE II-D GRANTS

Criteria	Poor	Average	Excellent
Experience with Evaluation – This area will look at the submission materials that deal with the experience of the entity in doing and completing quality evaluations for K-12 technology programs (50 Points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Is there sufficient experience for this work?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Is there sufficient expertise in the K-12 environment?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Is there clear indication of expertise in education technology?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Understanding and documented experience in qualitative and quantitative collection and analysis?</i> 	0 – 17	18 – 35	36 – 50
Experience with Evaluation – Total Score (MAX is 50):			
Scope of Work Response – This area will look at the submission materials that deal with the Scope of Work Section. Has the entity exhibited materials that address these points? (20 Points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Have areas in the scope of work been addressed?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Is there indication that the entity can meet those areas in the Scope of Work?</i> 	0 – 6	7 – 13	14 – 20
Scope of Work – Total Score (MAX is 20):			
Capacity for Success – This area looks at the understanding and ability of the entity to address specific ARRA and II-D requirements in reporting on grant programs. (20 Points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Is there indication of how entity will continue to gather information on collecting and analyzing data for reporting?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Is it clear that ARRA and Title II-D resources have been studied in preparation for this work?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Does the entity have the resources to complete a statewide and multi-faceted evaluation program?</i> 	0 – 6	7 – 13	14 – 20
Capacity for Success – Total Score (MAX is 20):			
Planning Preparation – Is there adequate evidence that entity can develop an overall plan for the work ahead? (20 Points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Is there evidence in the examples that planning was a significant phase of the evaluation process?</i> 	0 – 3	4 – 7	8 – 10
Planning Preparation – Total Score (MAX is 10):			
TOTAL SCORE (MAX IS 100)	_____		